

*In  
memoriam*



*Sidney K. Gally*  
1920 ~ 2016

# Memorial Service

Neighborhood Unitarian Universalist Church

Pasadena, California

June 19, 2016





**S**idney Kilburne Gally was born in Pasadena, California, on July 26, 1920.

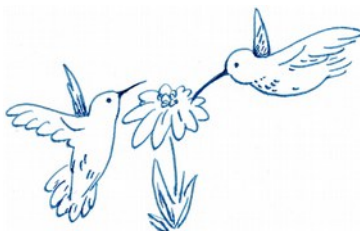
His father, Thomas Kilburne Gally—known as “Kib” to his family and friends—was born in 1888 in Ventura and grew up in the Ojai Valley, where his family owned a ranch and ran a hotel. His mother, Lilian Norman, was born in 1890 in Duarte. The two met while students at Pomona College, where Lilian had been chosen the first Queen of the May. Kib, who later graduated from Cornell, was a talented athlete, playing tennis, baseball, and golf, and Lilian was a versatile musician, playing both violin and piano; in her later years, she made exquisite dolls for play and display. After Kib’s service in the Army Air Corps during World War I, the couple moved to Pasadena, where Kib worked in finance for the William R. Staats Co. Lilian was a housewife and played violin in a local orchestra.

Kib and Lilian’s first child, Mary, died a few months after her birth in 1917. Sid also had a brother, David (1925–1997), who served in the Marine Corps in World War II and the Korean War and later worked in the defense industry in Colorado. He and his wife, the former Jean Willcox (1926–1994), are survived by their daughter Ann Dye, whose husband, Allen, passed away in 1998, and by their daughter Janet Lowman, her husband Steve, two grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.





Sid grew up in a house on South Wilson in Pasadena. He attended Grant Elementary School, McKinley Junior High School, and Pasadena Junior College (now Pasadena City College). He then transferred to Caltech, where he majored in electrical engineering. From elementary school through college, he was able to walk to school every day.



As a child, Sid did well in school and skipped a grade along the way. Among many other interests, he enjoyed making crystal radio sets, and he would later dabble in ham radio. He played trumpet in orchestras and bands, and he learned the piano as well. His father had inherited a small cottage in Avalon on Catalina Island, and he often spent summers there with his family as a child. The house is still in the family, and Sid visited there for the last time in July 2015.

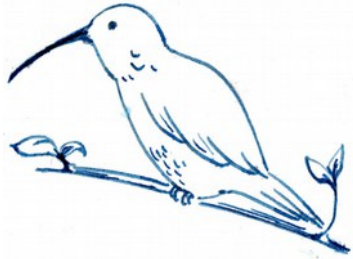
After Sid graduated from Caltech, he started working for the Southern California Gas Company. When World War II broke





out, he enlisted in the Navy and was commissioned as an ensign. While in the Navy, he taught electronics at the Harvard and MIT Radar Schools, and he also served as a member of a destroyer squadron commander's staff. When the war ended, he was on a ship passing through the Panama Canal on its way to Japan, where he would spend several months with the occupation forces in 1945 and 1946.

After returning to Pasadena, Sid met Helen McCloskey at the home of his friends, Bob and Ev Mahaffey. Helen, who was born in 1925, had grown up in a large family in the tiny town of Warwick, North Dakota. Around the time she finished high school, her family moved to Portland, Oregon. She attended junior college and worked in Portland before moving with her friend Meribeth Olsen to Southern California, where they found jobs and Helen attended USC for a semester.

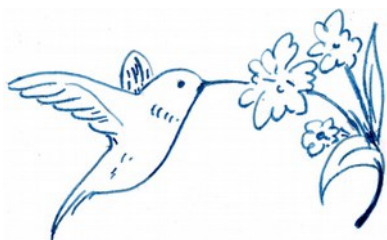


After a long courtship, Sid and Helen were married in 1951 and moved into the house at 1061 Mar Vista where they were to live for the rest of their lives. Their daughter Joan was born in 1952, followed by Susan in 1954 and Tom in 1957.





Sid spent his entire career at the Southern California Gas Company, first as an engineer and later as an executive. After his retirement in 1983, he maintained contact with many of his former colleagues, and for several years he



edited the retiree newsletter. In his retirement, he had more time to pursue his long-held interest in California history. He wrote articles on local history for the *Pasadena Star-News*, and he volunteered for the Pasadena Museum

of History, which honored him with the title of Trustee Emeritus in 2014. He was also a member of Los Angeles Westerners.

Helen was a full-time housewife when the children were small, but in the mid-1960s she went back to school to finish her college education. After receiving a bachelor's degree and teacher's credential from California State University, Los Angeles, she taught fourth and fifth grades at Madison Elementary School in Pasadena and Edison Elementary School in Altadena.

Separately and together, Sid and Helen were very active in the local community, including the Friends of the Gamble House,





Bungalow Heaven, the League of Women Voters, the Caltech Alumni Association, Young and Healthy, Pasadena Village, citizen committees of the City of Pasadena, and, especially, the Pasadena Museum of History and Neighborhood Unitarian Universalist Church, which they joined soon after their marriage.

They had many friends, and they often attended plays and concerts. They also enjoyed traveling. In 1964, the family drove across the United States in a station wagon, visiting Boston, New York, Washington, D.C., Wheeling, W.V., Denver, and many other places along the way. The family traveled to Europe in 1968 and 1971, and Sid and Helen made many trips abroad later. They especially enjoyed visiting Mexico, Morocco, Indonesia, and New Zealand when Joan lived there, as well as Japan, where Tom has lived since 1983. They also made regular trips to Berkeley to spend time with Susan and her family there. They often visited Helen's family in Oregon, where they celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 2001.

Joan retired in 2016 after a career as a teacher at international schools around the world. She is married to Peter McLellan and has two step-daughters and two step-grandchildren, and she and Peter are planning to retire to New Zealand, where Peter is from. Susan has worked for many years at the headquarters of the Sierra Club in San Fran-







cisco and now Oakland. Her husband, Karl Golden, is an architect. They have two grown children, Eric and Natalie. Tom lives with his wife, Ikuko, and two grown daughters, Sara and Anna, in Yokohama, Japan, and works at a university in Tokyo.

Helen's death from cancer in 2004 was a sad blow for Sid, but with support from friends and family he was able to recover. He maintained an active life for over a decade more, continuing to live in the same house on Mar Vista and to drive until nearly the age of ninety-five. He kept in close contact with family and friends both in person and through the Internet, and he was fortunate to continue making new friends and developing new interests well into his nineties.

After his death on March 10, 2016, many friends and relatives offered their thoughts and memories about him and Helen. For those kind words his children and grandchildren will be forever grateful.







Joan Gally-McLellan

Susan Golden

Tom Gally

Illustrations by Sara Gally

